

employer for those 3 years.
These businesses aren't running
some rest home.

FEMALE MUD WRESTLING

The middle eastern woman working in the postal service outpost in the back of her husband's pizza place wears enough gold around her wrists and neck to buy a lemon grove in San Diego. She's too rich and beautiful to work here and lets me know by walking slowly instead of saying I'll be right there when I ding the bell; she quibbles with me over 4th class book rate, shakes my Xmas packages for potential rock and rolling dope and uzis and refuses to insure them because of the tape I used. Because she's so rich and beautiful, she holds up her nose while she eyes my jeans and old Dodge I park next to her new Cadillac, and does not tell me to have a nice day when I walk away. In her country, she knows, that with my beady eyes and narrow hips, I wouldn't have married well there either, probably to some stinky Bedouin cheesemaker who'd kowtow and hah-so to her pizza- and falafel-making husband coming to buy his feta and tahini. I dislike female fights for human status, wrestling in the haute-coutured and French-parfumed mud some husbands buy. It sullies our sisterhood. Impedes clitoral growth. But if I ever get the chance, I'd like to spill pomegranate juice all over her white Anne Klein, and cram a little spanakopita up her aquiline, peasant-pshaw-ing nose.

ORGANIC ORCHARD

This summer I had to fight for the right to my own peaches from a horde of Genghis Khan beetles bivouacked in the highest branches of my tree, glistening in the sun like emeralds or scum. Armored

with rubber gloves, broom, and wooden shoes, I began my assault — smacked the branches from the rear with my broom, squashed the wounded beetles with my shoes, swatted the retreating beetles into the neighbor's yard, until a beetle kamikazied into my hair, flakked into my ear, and another beetle divebombed into the bodice of my sundress and I ran for my life back into the house where I watched the beetles through my sliding-glass door the rest of June have their fill of my peaches, each chomping its way through a peach a day so loud I could hear them lick their chops from my kitchen. Last year, when the peaches were all mine, I made 41 cobblers — 8 cups of sliced peaches in each — and when my kids got sick of eating peach cobbler every day, I gave them to friends and neighbors, then froze some we later ate on Thanksgiving and Christmas. This year, though, I made only four, but tell my war stories and brag about my Peach Badge of Courage and my Peach Heart.

KAFKA THE SPIDER

My tract home was designed in the '60s, one of those architectural ostrich-optimisms, a G.E. untruism, so there are no windows in my bathroom, just one of those blowers that megaphone all the jet-airlined, cop-helicoptered sky noise and the nearby freeway roar while I take my bath. Because of the unnatural darkness, my bathroom's the local hideout for spiders, who probably think it an attic, a dungeon, or some other unlit den of iniquity. So every morning, before I run my bath, there's always a spider near the faucet, so I Save The Spider, transport it upon my comb to the